3:Naah E-5 (1964-1965)1967
NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Teklum
[P468-A]

accused him of being a witch, he was put in the local jail by the judge and then removed to the departmental capital. During his term of imprisonment an epidemic broke out in the town: it was attributed to witchcraft supposedly practiced by him and by two other curers who remained in town. These two were then imprisoned. After they were set free, all three men were killed in different episodes involving accusations of witchcraft. Permission to act as executioners was granted by the civil authority.

In the past, the public review of a case before a killing probably served to minimize homicide, since permission was not always granted. Since 1953, when a large highway first linked the town to the departmental capital and communication between this center of justice and the local township increased, the civil authority has not given permission, and prior review of witchcraft cases occurs only with epidemics.

The final incident in which the civil authority confronted the curers occurred in the spring of 1966. The president accused one of the curers of cutting short his life by lighting candles in the mountains. The curers were called together to hear the threat and to go to the hill to look at the evidence. The accused curer remained at home pleading that he was sick. He was warned not to pursue his witchcraft, and as yet there has been no use of violence on either side. This open confrontation without the use of violence may indicate a change in the strategy of conflict with the growing power of the president.

(3) *Breakdown of the dual division.* The loss of internal controls in the curing profession and the conflict for power and control by the civil officials and the curers are related to a more fundamental change in the social structure of the community. Formerly the division of the town into two sections provided a channel for opposition as well as cooperation. Recruitment into leadership positions in both the civil hierarchy and the curing hierarchy was based upon residence. The system provided checks and balances in the exercise of power, for the two principales—one from each section of the dual division—were supposed to act as watchdogs over the curers. The shift in the locus of social control from the principales to the president has been marked by the open confrontation with the curers.

The authority of the president, however,

291 184 a typical outfit with special characteristics. For instance, the men of Tenejapa wear a hat of broad brim and pointed round crown, trimmed with thin ribbons of different colors. They also wear a dark chamarra or poncho with thin white stripes. The characteristic clothes of Cancuc are short, tight pants and a long shirt trimmed with red wool yarn. In Tierra Caliente the wool chamarra is not used nor is the variation in outfit so well defined.

Transportation

482 [484] [487] [492] 482 147 Men and pack animals are the principal carriers in the Tzeltal region, which is crossed in all directions by narrow trails. Men carrying loads of 40–50 kg. usually walk, in one day, as far as 8 leguas (leagues). According to Blom and LaFarge (1926–27, 2:386), the Tzeltal of the highlands are so strong "que ponen en vergüenza a una mula." In 1944 I observed Indians [565] passing by my Yochib camp, carrying chairs on their shoulders, in which a lady or a child of upper-class Ladinos from Ocosingo 492 and Yajalon would be sitting. Pack animals are now becoming common among the Tzeltal, some of whom also have saddle horses.

491 Part of the Tzeltal-Tzotzil region is crossed by the Pan-American Highway joining Guatemala and Mexico City. In recent years, roads called "brechas de penetración" for motor vehicles are being constructed. 474 493 The natives of some communities (Oxchuc and Chanal) have organized cooperatives and purchased their own trucks.

804 *Units of Measure*

The system of measures still retains aboriginal characteristics. The main units are:

Nab: Distance between the end of the thumb and the middle finger extended.

Chutub: Distance between the end of the thumb and the index finger extended. It is equivalent to the jeme. The Indians do not use the cuarta (distance between the thumb and little finger extended).

[P. 208-B]

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

Revolutions have since destroyed the herds, and the town now has only a small local trade in sugar and rum.

All goods are transported on mule-back over bad trails. Main trails run to Yajalon, San Cristóbal las Casas, and Comitan. Minor trails connect with Tenosique in Tabasco, a ride of five or six days through uninhabited forests. Other small trails lead into the heart of the forests along the Usumacinta river, where there are a few mahogany camps, fourteen days distance on a good mule.

The Spanish Conquerors had quickly discovered the richness of the soil and taken possession of it. Therefore, we find but a few Indians around Ocosingo, save at the small town of Sivacá, entirely inhabited by Tzeltal-speaking Indians. From there we secured our labourers, who were summoned by the municipal president and worked for us at the regulation pay of 50 centavos per day. Ocosingo holds sway over the native towns of Sivacá, Tenango, Oschuc, San Martín, and Bachajon. The municipality commands the Indians for all kinds of work, and in many ways lives on what can be pressed from them. As a consequence, the good people of Ocosingo are anything but popular among the Indians, though it appears that the man then in charge, Señor Simon Leon, was quite friendly towards them, and therefore well liked.

Geologically, the Ocosingo Valley is a syncline, the valley bottom and the interior mountain ranges being of a coarse red sandstone, and the exterior ranges of limestone. The axis of the valley runs approximately N-80-W to S-80-E, and Ocosingo town is located at an altitude of 900 meters above sea level.

As we rode into the village, La Farge discovered a stone block, carved with hieroglyphs, set in the pavement of the sidewalk, an excellent reception for archaeologists.

Our first concern was to find quarters, which we located in a house on the corner of a street leading into the Plaza. Soon our equipment was unloaded, and while we unpacked, the Ladino guide we had acquired in Bachajon went to his house to order food for us.

The restaurant and meal were a surprise, though not pleasant. In a room with a rotten board floor, the plaster falling off the walls, and a huge box full of saints, we were served fried eggs and black beans by an old woman with a large goitre. Though nothing in the house appeared to be either particularly exclusive or clean, the Ladino family seemed to resent that we sat down at the table with our chief guide, the trusty old Indian, Lázaro, now called "Tata" by us.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

Cancuc
Tenejapa

From Cancuc the road falls slowly away, then it climbs to the steep side of the ridge and at last dips precipitously to a covered bridge over a narrow ravine. All along on both sides little cornfields alternate with second-growth. Ahead, the same great palisade that we saw from Tenango rises in a green wall, patched with fields and broken here and there by outcrops of cliffs and hanging valleys. We passed a dribbling of traffic, Indians on foot, and at the bridge met a family of Mexicans noisily eating a picnic lunch. The ravine was deep, rock-walled, with a roaring stream in the shadows of the bottom. From the other side of it the palisade rose immediately, looking almost perpendicular and indefinitely high to us as we contemplated it. The road assumed a stiff grade, rising in a series of zig-zags that gained painfully to the top. Straight up, almost like a ruled line, lay the Indian trail, taking no account of the twists and turns of the road. Our carriers from Cancuc, who took on the cargo that the Tenango men had carried the day before, had gone up that fearsome climb. We tried it, but the horses slid and fell back on their haunches, and we ourselves could barely keep our footing. So we continued along the road, turning and turning, seeming never to gain, and fearing that our animals would never make it. The heat of the sun was thrown back by the hillside and the road.

We toiled on. Low growth and brush on the side of the road gave no shade. The dust rose high. The air, for all the heat, began to have a pleasant crispness that reminded us of high altitudes in other countries. Then we smelt a familiar smell which we ignored until its persistent recurrence forced us to look, see, and believe—that blackberries grow wild in Chiapas! The event of the next hours amused Lazaro greatly, for here in Mexico we found ourselves among familiar northern flowers and wild fruits, buttercups, dandelions, wild roses, blackberries, strawberries, all strange to him. We passed an Indian farm, stuck into a tiny hanging valley, where peach trees and alligator pears were growing together in the cornfield.

At the top of the pass in a shallow V-shaped cut, the barometer read 2,100 meters, a climb of 600 meters—about 1,900 feet—in two hours.

The country changed beyond here to steep ravines, high cliffs, rushing, cold brooks, and tall, dark fir trees clothing the rocks. The tilled fields disappeared, the scattered houses, and stick fences. It was a wild, shaggy country—a perfect setting, we thought, for the home of the rough Tenejapeños that we had seen along the road.

Near evening, a road forked off to the right, leading to a split in a wall of high cliffs through which we could see, already dark with

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

Chapter 1

Spirits and Places

Social space is the cognitive pattern of relationships imposed upon any terrain. In Amatenango del Valle[1] there are two superimposed patterns. One is defined by the nation for the purposes of political administration. This follows the pattern of colonial administration of *municipios*, or townships, with a *cabecera*, or administrative center, containing the church, town hall, and school house, and serving a number of colonias and *rancherias*, local hamlets or nuclei of populations. The other pattern is defined by the inhabitants using Tzeltal terminology or a Tzeltal rendition of a Spanish name. In this pattern, domains of good and bad spirits are defined, and behavior appropriate to each place is specified in myths and rituals. Persistence of this pattern has had profound implications for continuity of pre-Conquest culture. It provides a ground plan for the system of social control and security exercised by the old gods and their human intermediaries.

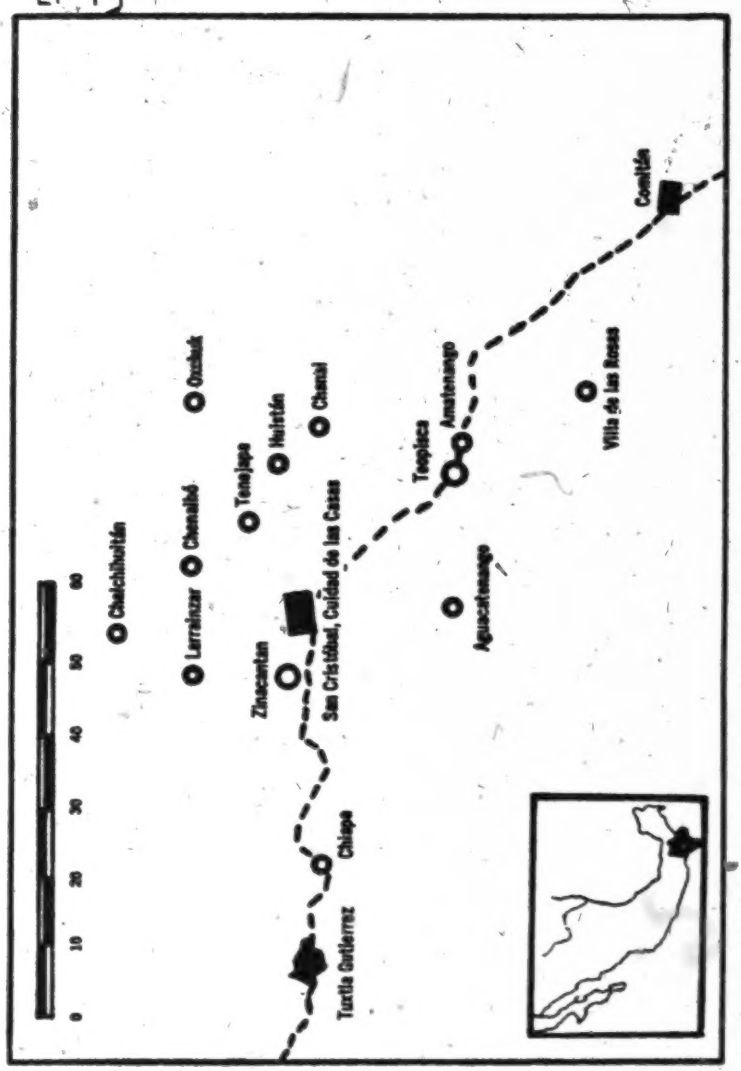
In the following section, I will discuss first territorial divisions defined by national law and modified by indigenous categories, and then the interaction between the spirits of persons and places.

The Territorial Divisions

The township of Amatenango del Valle is located at 92°30′ longitude and 16°30′ latitude in the highland zone of the state of Chiapas. The town center is located no more than fifty yards from the Pan-American Highway twenty-five miles southeast of the departmental capital of San Cristóbal.

1. I use the national designation derived from Nahuatl, Amatenango del Valle, to refer to the township, and the Tzeltal term Tzo'ontahal to refer to the center.

[P.4]



The State of Chiapas, showing the capital, Tuxtla; the two principal cities, San Cristóbal and Comitán; several surrounding Indian towns; and the Pan-American Highway (dashed line).

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It is considered much safer to drink in a bar on one's own side, but those men who pride themselves on being widely respected brag that they can drink on either side without becoming involved in a fight. When people must pass to the other side of town, they prefer walking on the Pan-American Highway, a socially neutral network, to passing through the streets of the opposite division, where their presence arouses curiosity and comments, such as "He must be looking for a lover!"

The colonias. The six colonias (Table 1) are populations of Indians who have moved from the center to take advantage of the lands granted under the ejido program of 1937 and "foreign Indians" who were formerly workers on the expropriated plantations. The Indians distinguish the close-lying settlements, or *barrios,* of Yetawitz, Pathuitz, B'očib'al, and Te?tikil from the remaining colonias listed in the census (Table 1). The populations of the barrios are more closely identified with the center since they are closer to it and there is a higher proportion of migrants from the parent group. They are linked to the side of the dual division to which they are most closely situated. Marriages can be contracted between members of the two settlements, and house lots can be acquired by residents of the town in the barrio with which they are associated. An exception was made to the association on the basis of proximity in the case of Te?tikil, which lies nearer to Alannantik but was linked with Ahk'olnantik in order to balance the population ratios at the time of its settlement. Police are appointed from these colonias and serve in the local *cabildo,* or town hall, along with other police from the center. The colonias of San Vicente and San Caralampio are farther away, and the rural judge and police appointed to these populations appear only once a week and during ceremonies in the local cabildo. The foreign Indians of San Vicente, who migrated from Chanal, and of Yetawitz, who came from Huistán to work in the finca of San Nicolás before acquiring ejido lands, are discriminated against in the local political organization. Their representatives never reach the high positions of president and first or second judge.

Ranchos and rancherías. The populations of these small settlements have only the most formal kind of social, economic, and political

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970

NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

[P 198-B]

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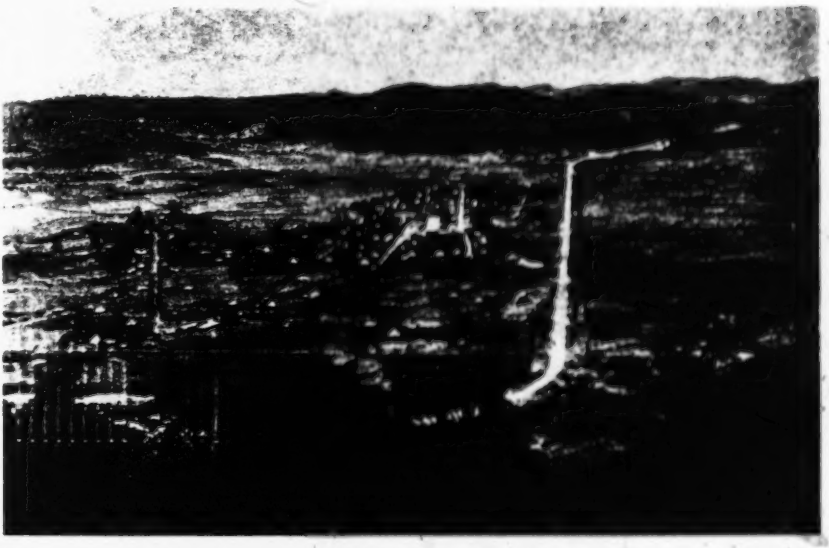

Plate 2. The view the ancestors had of the town from the Head of Palm shows the proximity of the village center to the Pan-American Highway just to the right of center. The church, which can be discerned in the center of the major settlement, is the dividing marker for the dual division. The barrio of Yetawitz is shown just to the left of the major settlement. The barrios of Madronal and La Grandeza are found at the mid-level of the hill in the far left, on the other side of the road which goes to Pinola and "hot country." The Ladino town of Teopisca lies just beyond the hills to the right along the Pan-American Highway. From this site, the ancestors were able to see clearly all of the thoroughfares within the town and guard against the entry of evil.

[p. 198-C]

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Plate 3. A father and his two sons, walking in order of age, leave the village to go to their milpa. The father, walking in front, is wearing the old-style costume with a wrapped overshirt concealing short undertrousers. His sons wear western clothing. All of the men carry net bags on a tumpline, with their backs protected from their burdens by a sheepskin. They all carry machetes, and the boys have rifles.

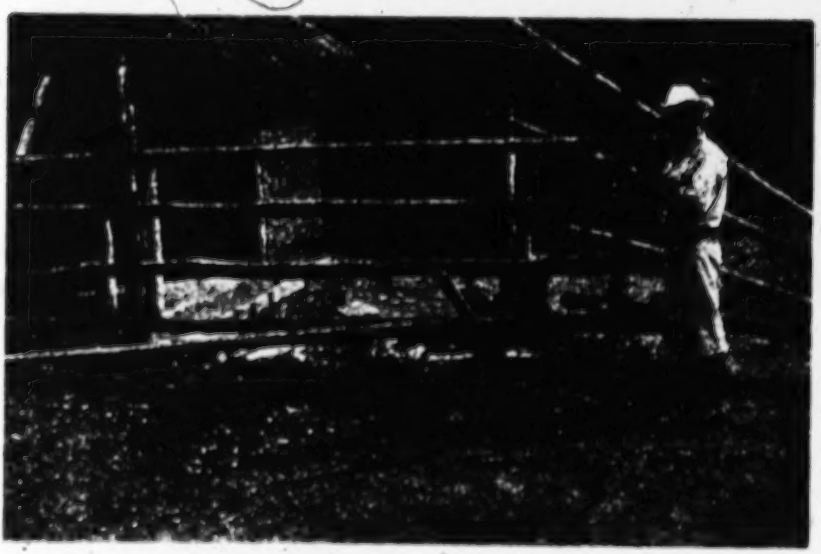

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Plate 4. Farmer showing the arada plow. He is holding the handle, and the shaft, made of a long tree post, is propped on the ground.

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Aguacatenango

CHAPTER II

THE GENERAL BACKGROUND FOR A CONTROLLED COMPARISON

Geography and Ecology

101
131 The communities selected for this study are located in the southwest quarter of the state of Chiapas, which is the southernmost state of the Republic of Mexico. This is a mountainous area [133] belonging to the Sierra Madre Occidental, and a part of the state's Central Plateau. The Plateau Summit of the area is to the north northwest of the villages, and contains the city of San Cristobal las Casas, ex-capital of the state (the present capital, Tuxtla, is in the lowlands).

The villages themselves are situated in the terraced margins of the plateau, which extend to the South into the Grijalva River Depression, and to the north and east into the Lacandon Jungle.

133
487 The slightly inclined terraces are criss-crossed by sev-
491 eral small streams tributary to the Blanco River, and by a complex network of paths, trails, and roads, including a section of the Pan American Highway which connects Mexico City with Guatemala and which is being constructed.

131
36 The villages of Aguacatenango and Amatenango are in two contiguous valleys (see Fig. 1) near to the section of the Pan

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 16]

American Highway which connects San Cristobal de las Casas with Comitan. They are 50 and 44 kilometers, respectively, from San Cristobal. Aguacatenango is closer to the branch road that continues south from the Highway to Venustiano Carranza, in the lowlands.

Both villages are 2,000 meters above sea level, placed in a slightly raised terrain in the valley floor.

The vegetation climaxes surrounding the settlements are the same: woodlands of pine and oak, the second predominating, grasslands which for the most part are secondary growths in abandoned agricultural plots, and thorny bushes which the inhabitants of the valleys utilize for building fences.

The range of cultivated plants is the same in the two villages, including several varieties of corn and beans, squash and a few greens, while other edible plants grow wild in the edges of streams and rocky places unsuited for cultivation (Kaplan in McQuown et al., 1959, Part II, Section 6).

The soils are mainly limestone base, calcareous clay loam and loam transported, both territories receiving the same amount of rain. Surface water is drained internally within the basin of the Rio Blanco, and in the edges of the village of Aguacatenango, forms, during the rainy season, a small lagoon, where a variety of small fish thrive (Wagner, in McQuown et al., 1959, Part II, Section 5).

The fauna include small deer, ocelots, snakes (poisonous and non-poisonous), domestic and field rats, and other small animals.

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Aguacatenango

621 Among its duties are those of keeping vital statistics for 46
659 the National Population Bureau which are sent to the state office,
392 solving cases of adultery and theft, collecting the fiesta and
651 Ejido taxes, keeping the streets clean, building and repairing
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491 roads and public buildings, and also taking charge of the local
244 jail. Ayuntamiento officers are also called in to prevent or solve
754 witchcraft cases and give advice and reprimands to misbehaving
626 wives, sons and other relatives when the household or the responsible relatives cannot deal with the case on their own.

621 The Ayuntamiento also keeps its own corn field, worked by
423 communal labor, whose crop is sold to collect funds for its own
432 expenses.
434

794 The Mayordomia, or religious body, performs the formal activities on the religious holidays, is the custodian of the sacred objects (rockets, church keys, bells) connected with the Church, and the authority which carries out the tasks required by all of man's peaceful relations with the supernatural on the village level.

They are responsible as a group for the upkeep of the Church building and saint images, and the preparations for and the performance of Church Fiestas, regular church meetings, etc. Among their duties are those of providing meals for the priest while he is in town, helping during mass, contracting musicians and collecting the Church limosna during mass.

621 This structural level lacks monopoly of either of these functions in relation to other less inclusive social units. Social control and religious activity are carried on at the level of the barrio, the extended family, and within the household, and religious activity can be carried on by individuals.